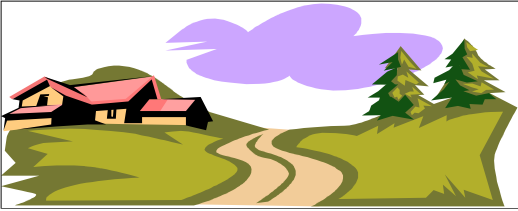


What is a County Road Improvement District?

County residents are always looking for ways to minimize the effects of dust from dirt roads, maintain access to their property in bad weather, or simply improve the appearance of their community. A County road improvement district may be the answer.

The State of Arizona authorizes the creation of improvement districts in unincorporated areas (areas located outside city limits) for the purposes of making local improvements such as paving, re-paving, grading, re-grading, or to improve all, or any portion of, one or more streets in a proposed district.



The State Statute (ARS Title 48, Chapter 6) also provides a means to pay for the improvements by assessing property owners for the construction, operation and maintenance of improvements and streets within the district.

Authority to create an improvement district is given to the County Board of Supervisors, who also serves in an official capacity as the District Board of Directors. However, it is the citizens' responsibility to take the necessary steps to begin the process and gain consensus in their neighborhood.

What's the difference between a road improvement district and a road maintenance district?

Roadways that are improved through the **road improvement district** process are improved with the goal of adding the roadway to the County road system. **Roadways improved through this process must be deeded to the County and located within public rights-of-way.**

These roadways must meet minimum County road standards, which require pavement. Once this process is completed, the roads will be eligible for acceptance into the County road system.

It is important to note that dedication of right-of-way to the public by itself does not constitute public ownership or County responsibility to maintain the roadway. The County Board of Supervisors must formally accept the offer of dedication in order to bring the roadway into the County system for maintenance.

In many neighborhoods, pavement is not always desirable or financially feasible. Improvement districts for the purpose of maintenance, also known as **road maintenance districts**, provide a mechanism for County residents to make improvements to their roadway, guarantee a minimum level of maintenance on their road (without the expense of building the roads to County improvement standards), and establish full financial participation among neighbors. The minimum standard for roads improved through this process is the State Fire Code standard.

Pavement is not required for roads improved and maintained through the road maintenance district process. It is also possible to form a maintenance district for dust control on unpaved roadways. It is important to note that, in a maintenance district, residents are required to pay an annual maintenance fee.

Formation

A **road improvement district** may be formed only if a petition is submitted to the County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. The petition must contain signatures of:

- More than one-half of the property owners; OR
- Owners of more than one-half of the property fronting the proposed road(s); OR
- Owners of one-half of the property by total area within the proposed project boundaries
- To improve roadways that do not have public easements, citizens are required to gain Right of Ways before the district is formed

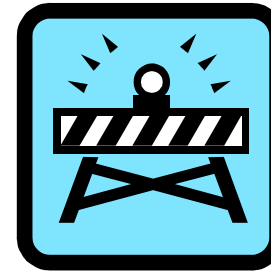
Road maintenance districts have a higher standard to meet for formation. The Board of Supervisors has established a policy that requires signatures of 70% of the property owners, or owners of 70% of the real property, in the proposed road maintenance district.

Petitions

All petitions must include:

- * The name of the proposed improvement district;
- * Justification of the need for the improvement;
- * Justification that the public convenience, necessity or welfare will be promoted by the establishment of the district and that the property to be included in the district will benefit from the district;
- * The boundaries of the proposed district;
- * A general outline of the proposed improvement;
- * A map identifying the approximate area and boundaries of the district.

Petitioners must also file a bond sufficient to pay the expenses connected with the proceedings. This bond must be filed before publication of the notice of the hearing on the petition.



General Requirements

Improvement districts finance road improvement projects by assessing the properties that benefit from the improvement. **The required assessment is a lien against the property.** There are two ways in which assessments may be paid:

- ◇ Assessments may be paid in full at the time the assessment is recorded; OR
- ◇ Assessments may be financed as bonds over a ten (10) year period.

The District Engineer generally determines the payment method for assessing property in the district. Assessments may be based on:

- * Lineal feet of property that fronts the improvement
- * Per lot
- * Per acre

Scope of Work and Cost

The estimated cost of a project depends on the scope of work for the improvement. Factors that influence the scope of work include the existing conditions of roads being considered for improvement, the needs and desires of the district, and County design standards. The following items may be included in the work inventory:

- Survey*
- Utility relocation
- Testing*
- Construction *
- Legal fees *
- Posting, publishing, mailing notices *
- Administration *
- Right-of-way dedication/acquisition
- Hydrologic and drainage analysis*
- Design *
- Construction inspection *
- Bond marketing
- Capitalized interest *

(* indicates items that must be included in all cases)

Citizens interested in the formation of a road improvement district are advised to obtain preliminary construction estimates on proposed improvements from a private engineering consultant before starting the petition process.

Generally speaking, if the estimated improvement costs total more than one-third the value of all real property in the proposed district, the project is not considered feasible.

Next Steps

After completed petitions are submitted to the Clerk of the Board, a public hearing will be set, a notice will be published in the newspaper, and notices will be posted. After all comments and objections are duly considered and the Board of Supervisors determines that the public convenience, necessity or welfare will be promoted, the district boundaries are finalized and engineering and financing arrangements can begin.

Important Factors to Consider

- ⊕ **Once the district is formed, each property owner is committed to the project; a majority of the property owners is required to create, modify or stop an improvement district.**
- ⊕ **Property owners will be assessed for the paving costs, which could amount to thousands of dollars per property owner.**
- ⊕ **The required assessment is a lien against the property.**
- ⊕ **All roads improved through the improvement district process must be deeded to the County and located within public easements or rights-of-way.**

Property owners are encouraged to talk with their neighbors to determine the level of support for a proposed road district. Important questions to ask are: "Does the neighborhood want to improve the road to the minimum County standard so the roadway can be taken over by the County, OR do they want to improve the road to a lesser standard?" and "Is the neighborhood willing to deed the required right-of-way to the County?"

County staff is available to provide advice and direction to citizens interested in the formation of road improvement districts. Interested County residents are encouraged to call Special Districts (928) 779-6576 or (800) 790-1990 for more detailed information on district requirements and to obtain copies of petitions. Information is also available on the County website at:

<http://www.coconino.az.gov/roadimpdist.aspx>



SPECIAL DISTRICTS

219 E. Cherry, Flagstaff, AZ. 86001
(928) 779-6576 or (800) 559-9289
website – www.coconino.az.gov

JANUARY 2007

*Interested in improving your roads?
Where do you go from here?*

Coconino County

ROAD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

**General Information &
Procedures for Formation**



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- ⌘ The difference between a road im-
provement district and a road main-
tenance district?
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